

## **High School Lesson 1**

### **Quote #1 Answer Key:**

(Quote from *The Humorous Mr. Lincoln*, by Keith Jennison)

This passage illustrates Lincoln's famed logical reasoning skills and shows off a bit of his sense of humor. He makes an argument against slavery by showing that no man can put himself above another man without also putting himself below someone else. If a white man justifies enslaving others because they have dark skin, he would then rightly qualify as a slave to anyone with lighter skin than himself. The same reasoning holds for those thinking themselves intellectually superior—if you believe you can enslave someone because he isn't as smart as you are, then you must also believe that anyone smarter than you has the right to enslave you, too.

What is Lincoln arguing against in this passage?

*Slavery*

How does Lincoln see the United States government as fundamentally different from other governments in history?

*He says that while most governments throughout history have been based on the denial of equal rights, the United States government was actually created to affirm the equal rights of its citizens.*

How does Lincoln's argument support equal rights for all citizens?

*He shows that no one can justify his/her superiority over another person without putting himself/herself in the position of being judged by the same criteria: for example, if you look down on someone for being short then you had better hope that there is no one taller than you . . . Lincoln's argument demonstrates that the human condition is universal, and it shows that no one can logically argue that he or she is truly better than anybody else.*